

ETHEL COAL COMPANY: SUPPLY BUILDING
Left Fork of Dingess Run (Ethel Hollow)
.35 mile northeast of Route 17 on
Ethel Hollow Road
Ethel
Logan County
West Virginia

HAER No. WV-50

HAER
WVA
23-ETHEL,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER
WVA
23-ETHEL,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

ETHEL COAL COMPANY: SUPPLY BUILDING HAER No. WV-50

Location: Left Fork of Dingess Run (Ethel Hollow), .35 mile northeast of Rt. 17 on Ethel Hollow road, Ethel, Logan County, West Virginia.

UTM: 17.420085.4101620
Quad: Logan, West Virginia

Date of Construction: circa 1914

Builder: Ethel Coal Company

Present Owner: Dingess-Rum Coal Company
P. O. Box 189
McConnell, WV 25633

Present Use: Storage. To be removed in 1992.

Significance: Associated with the Dingess-Rum Coal Company and the development of the coal industry in Ethel Hollow in the 1914 to 1952 period.

Example of fine, utilitarian stone work done by immigrant Italian masons.

Located in Ethel Hollow, a staging area for defensive forces in the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921.

Project Information: This documentation was undertaken in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement by the Corps of Engineers as a mitigative measure prior to the removal of the building.

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I. Location and Site Description

The Ethel Coal Company Supply Building is located on a 400' wide bench site along the Left Fork of Dingess Run. Known locally as Ethel Hollow, the bench is bounded by steep, wooded hills. It lies in the northeastern part of the Logan County coal field, and has been associated with the local coal mining industry throughout its history.

The bench site, in addition to the stone building, includes five other structures. The Colley Equipment Company office building, 35' to the north, is a 12' x 16' cement-block building constructed in 1963. Further north and across the road are four, wood houses built between 1906 and ca. 1925 by the various coal companies operating Ethel No. 1 Mine in these years. Each of the houses is of a different size and design. Only the office building is associated, in a functional manner, to the stone building, and that affiliation dates to the late period (1963 - 1986). Other cultural remains at the site are the ruins of the Ethel No. 1 Company Store, located adjacent to the stone building on the west side, and the sealed No. 1 Mine portal, directly across the road. Both have a close historical and functional association with the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building.

II. Description of Building

The Ethel Coal Company Supply Building measures 43'-1/2" x 63'-1"; an 8'-4" loading dock extends along the entire north elevation and part of the west elevation, and the foundation of a 7'-7" platform or deck extends along a small part of the south elevation. Steps lead onto the loading dock from the west elevation. The building is 29'-3 7/8" tall with two stories.

The foundation and walls are sandstone; the floors are concrete. The walls are constructed of local, quarry-faced sandstone. The walls, which are 1'-6" thick, are composed of interior and exterior faces with rubble in-fill. They are tied together by occasional stone headers and are laid with mortar in a coursed, ashlar pattern. The stone is laid neatly; the parapet overhang and watertable demonstrate the mason's skill and attention to detail.

The roof is framed on a steel, Fink-type, roof truss; it is supported by interior steel columns running along the center of the building. The roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets. Evidence for an earlier roof can be seen in the 2" x 6" rafter pockets found at the top of the walls. There are four turret, metal ventilators on the roof ridge. A shed roof, framed with 4" x 4" steel channels and rails, and covered with corrugated metal

sheets, shelters the central part of the loading dock on the north elevation.

The building has three doorways. The doorway on the north, or front, elevation opens onto the loading dock; it measures 8'-3" wide, and is fitted with two, wood freight doors. The west elevation has a doorway 4'-1 1/8" wide which is fitted with a wood door. Ghost marks on the wall of this elevation over the doorway suggest that this entrance was covered with a low, gable roof (see view east, detail of west doorway photo). The east elevation has a 10'-8 1/2" wide doorway in which two metal sliding doors are set. An earthen access ramp, reinforced with heavy wood beams, leads from the east side to this doorway.

There are window openings with reinforced concrete sills and lintels on the second story level on all elevations. Both the north and south elevations have four, ten-pane, awning wood sash windows. The window openings on the east and west elevation are boarded-up.

The interior has a single floor. Evidence for an earlier, second floor can be seen in the eight concrete piers along the floor and the joist pockets in the stone walls (see south wall, looking west photo). The interior is unfinished. It is divided longitudinally into two bays by a concrete block partition. It is presently used for the storage of mine supplies, mainly core samples from the current mine prospecting operations.

III. Structural Changes in Building

The building has undergone several structural changes since it was erected in circa 1914, mainly in the roof, doorways and interior. From structural evidence, it appears that the present roof truss is not original, having been a replacement for an earlier wood truss composed of 2" x 6" rafters. It is likely that the steel truss and present roof were added before 1922, when a photo of the building was published (see Keystone Coal Buyers Catalogue, 1922, p. 986, view south photos). The photo shows that the 1922 roof was similar in configuration and slope, and in design and placement of the ventilators, to the present one. The corrugated metal roof covering could also date to 1922.¹ Before 1963, the steel truss was a single span. In that year, C. F. Colley erected steel support columns along the centerline of the building to strengthen it.²

¹Interview of C. F. Colley, December 17, 1991.

²Ibid.

Only the west doorway is original in size and placement. The steps leading up to the loading dock at this location and the ghost marks of a roof line on the wall suggest that the doorway and adjacent space was covered by a walkway leading to the company store site.³ The door on this elevation is of recent origin. The north or front doorway was slightly enlarged from its original size and framed with steel beams in the 1960s. The freight, wood doors pre-date 1952 and could be much older. The east doorway was enlarged in 1963 from its original width of about 3' to the present size, 10'-8 1/2". The opening was framed with steel beams and fitted with the present metal doors. The earthen access ramp on this side was added at the same time.⁴

In addition to the roof and doorways, the interior of the building has been changed dramatically. The original plan included two floors. The first floor was separated into two rooms, divided by a wood partition. The west room, adjacent to the company store, was approximately 24' x 43'. It was used to store canned and packaged items stocked by the company store. The larger first floor room was about 58' x 43' and used to store mine supplies. The second floor was constructed entirely of wood. It covered the west room and became a mezzanine over the east room, so that the center of the building was open. In 1963 the interior was modified by the Colley Equipment Company. The company removed the second floor and added the concrete block partition between the two rooms. It also built the concrete block office building on the north side of the stone building.⁵

IV. Architectural Significance

The Ethel Coal Company Supply Building is significant on a local and regional level as a fine example of the utilitarian stone work done by immigrant masons during the 1904 to 1914 period. During this period of rapid development of the mining industry, scores of mining plants and company towns, as well as railroads, bridges, aqueducts and public buildings, were built, not just in Logan County but also in the other Southern West

³Interviews of C. F. Colley, December 11, 1991 and Robert Bunch, July 16, 1991. Both said that a covered walkway between the two buildings existed.

⁴Interview of C. F. Colley, 11, 17, 1991. Colley renovated the building for use by his Colley Equipment Company.

⁵Interviews of C. F. Colley, December 11, 1991 and Robert Bunch, July 16, 1991.

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Virginia coal fields. Many of these stone structures were built by immigrant masons and laborers arriving from Italy and other countries.

In Logan County, the Italian masons and contractors, Pete Minnoti and Charlie Bennett, were the leading builders in stone. Minnoti, from Favaro, Italy, was responsible for the construction of numerous mining facilities, including buildings, retaining walls, house foundations, tipple piers, and roads. He is most noted for his work for the Island Creek Coal Company, mainly at Mine No. 22. He also built public buildings, including the Boone County Courthouse (1915). Bennett, born in Naples, worked in stone and brick. His work in Logan County was largely confined to the city of Logan. It included "many of the largest and finest buildings in the city," and most notably, the Guyan Valley Bank building (1904) and the waterworks (1903).⁶ In addition to Minnoti and Bennett, S. C. Coda, another Italian, Tom O'Reilly, an Irishman, and John "Dutch" (last name unknown) are known to have worked in Logan County during this period.⁷

Documentation on the builder and construction date is skimpy. The original drawings have been destroyed, and, unfortunately, Dingess-Rum Coal Company lease books and county assessor's tax and land books are of no help. C. F. Colley, who worked in the building from 1952 until 1986, was the last to see the drawings. He recalls that the building was constructed around 1914 by Ethel Coal Company.⁸ Colley, as well as sources Bill Long and Robert Bunch, have speculated that Minnoti may have been the builder.⁹ The existence of the inscription, the initials "H. M," cut into a stone along the west wall of the loading dock, suggest a possible Minotti link. However, there is no documentation to link Minotti with the structure. While none of the sources can make this connection, all of them agree that Italian masons played a major role in the construction of the

⁶George Thomas Swain, History of Logan County, West Virginia, (Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, 1927), p. 347; Robert Y. Spence, The Land of the Guyandot: A History of Logan County, (Detroit: Harlo Press, 1976), p. 303.

⁷Interviews of Robert Spence, December 16, 1991 and Vanta Coda, December 16, 1991.

⁸Interview of C. F. Colley, November 12, December 11, 1991.

⁹Interviews of Robert Bunch, August 8, 1991; C. F. Colley, November 12, December 16, 1991; and Bill Long, July 17, December 16, 1991.

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building. No case can be made that S. C. Coda was the builder.¹⁰ It is likely that the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building was built by unknown Italian masons and laborers in circa 1914 for the Ethel Coal Company.

V. Association with Dingess-Rum Coal Company and the Coal Industry in Ethel Hollow

The Ethel Coal Company Supply Building is significant on a local and county level for its association both with Dingess-Rum Coal Company, a West Virginia-owned land company that played a key role in opening Logan County to development, and the coal mining industry in Ethel Hollow and Logan County during the 1914 to 1962 period. The building is the last remaining industrial structure from the various underground coal mining companies that operated in Ethel Hollow from 1907 to 1962. During this period, the building was used to store mine supplies and canned and packaged food items sold by the adjacent Ethel Company Store No. 1.

With its rugged topography, lack of navigable streams and nearly impassable roads, Logan County was largely isolated from the rest of nation until the beginning of the 20th century. Although logging had taken its place as an important industry in some parts of the county, the economy remained largely subsistence-based and the population sparse. This would change with the arrival of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and the beginning of large scale coal mining in 1904.

The existence of vast coal deposits in the Logan County area had been recognized since the 1850s. By the late 1880s, railroad company presidents and land speculators had begun to take an interest in the county's coal deposits.¹¹ Three of these early land speculators and developers were James L. Caldwell, a banker from Huntington, C. W. Campbell, an attorney from Huntington, and John Q. Dickinson, a banker from Charleston. In the 1890s, these three men purchased jointly many tracts of land lying on the waters of Dingess and Rum Creeks.¹²

The partners had purchased some of the finest coal lands in the country with six accessible seams of coal: the Lewis-Stockton or Five Block, the Chilton, the Winifrede, the Coalburg, the Cedar Grove or Island Creek, and the Number 2 Gas or Eagle

¹⁰Interview of Vanta Coda, December 16, 1991.

¹¹Walter R. Thurmond, The Logan Coal Field of West Virginia, (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Library, 1964), p. 24.

¹²Ibid., p. 33.

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seam. Realizing that their coal lands would be worthless without rail transportation, Caldwell and Campbell joined with W. M. Campbell, J. H. Holt and H. T. Lovett to form the Guyandotte Valley Railroad Company on March 1, 1899. The Guyandotte Valley began construction in the spring of 1900 on a line that would run from Barboursville, near Huntington, to Logan and points south. After twenty-five miles of the line were built, the company ran out of capital and the project stalled. In April, 1901, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, which already had extensive operations in Southern West Virginia, agreed to finance the remainder of the line, and on October 31, 1903, it formally merged with the Guyandotte Valley Railroad Company. With the C & O's resources, the railroad project was pushed forward rapidly. On September 9, 1904 the first train arrived at Logan Town.¹³

Meanwhile, Caldwell, Campbell, and Dickinson had formed the Dingess-Rum Coal Company in June of 1903 to administer their lands, which totaled over 26,000 acres. The company was one of four land companies in Logan County owning over 20,000 acres.¹⁴ Although the mainline of the C & O was in place by 1904, the railroad still had not reached the company's properties east of Logan on Dingess Run and Rum Creek. To hasten the construction of the Dingess Run Branch, the company surveyed the route and laid the cross-ties so that all that remained for the C & O was to lay the rails.¹⁵

Dingess Run twists and turns its way through narrow hollows from its headwaters on Spruce Fork Ridge to Stollings, 1 1/2 miles south of Logan, where it empties into the Guyandotte River. About 4 1/2 miles east of Stollings, Dingess Run divides into Left and Right Forks. The Dingess Run Branch of the C & O was completed to this juncture by late 1906. Shortly thereafter, it was extended from this point in two directions: the first up the Right Fork (also known as George's Creek) to Rogunning or Hetzel, and the second spur up the Left Fork (which later became known as Ethel Hollow). At the juncture of the two forks and the railroad spurs, the company town of Ethel, named for the daughter or wife of an early, unknown coal operator, was established around 1907.¹⁶

The Dingess-Rum Coal Company, despite its name, has never operated coal mines. Rather, it divided its land into

¹³Ibid., p. 25, 33.

¹⁴Thurmond, p. 33

¹⁵Interview of Bill Long, December 16, 1991.

¹⁶Thurmond, p. 56.

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leaseholds, each with acreage ranging from 500 to 4,000 acres, and leased them to operating companies. The leaseholds on Dingess Run were readily leased after the construction of the railroad.¹⁷ The land company allowed the coal companies to build mining plants, dwelling houses, and all other facilities for the extraction of coal. Initially, it charged the companies a rental or royalty rate of eight cents per ton on all coal mined. This rate was adjusted over the years to reflect the price of coal.

The discussion of coal mining history below is based primarily on statistics and other information obtained from the Annual Reports of the West Virginia Bureau of Mines and the Keystone Coal Catalogue. Additional information was obtained through interviews. A table showing the coal companies operating the No. 4, No. 5 and No. 6 leases of Dingess-Rum Coal Company in Ethel Hollow, which used the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building in their operations, is provided on the following page.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 34.

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TABLE 1

COAL COMPANIES, MINES AND DATES OF OPERATION FOR DINGESS-RUM COAL
COMPANY LEASES NO. 4, 5 & 6

COAL COMPANY	MINES	DATES OF OPERATION
Ethel Coal Company	Nos. 1 & 2 Nos. 1, 2 & 3	1907 - 1916 1917
Logan Coal Company	Logan No. 1	1908 - 1916
Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company	Nos. 1, 2 & 3	1918 - 1929
Ethel Block Coal Company	No. 2	1931 - 1932
Chilton Block Coal Company	No. 2	1933 - 1940
Dan H. Pritchard, Contractor No. 2	No. 1	1935 - 1941
Chilton Block Coal Company, A. L. McCalla, Receiver	No. 2	1941 - 1943
Chilton Coal Company	No. 2	1944 - 1945
Ethel Chilton Mines, Inc.	No. 1 Nos. 1 & 2 Nos. 1, 2 & 3 Nos. 2 & 3 No. 2	1942 - 1945 1946 - 1950 1951 - 1952 1953 - 1955 1956 - 1962

Sources: Keystone Coal Buyers Catalog, 1921 - 1962; West
Virginia Department of Mines, Annual Reports, 1907 - 1962.

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Dingess-Rum leased its lands to three operating companies in 1906. Near the juncture of the Left and Right Forks of Dingess Rum on the north side of the stream, Logan Coal Company had lease No. 4, 1,255 acres. Ethel Coal Company took leases Nos. 5 & 6, 1,809 acres, further up Ethel Hollow, mainly on the north side of the stream. Logan Mining Company obtained lease No. 8, 543 acres, on the south side of the stream.¹⁸ The companies built mining plants, dwelling houses for their workers, and other facilities, and were ready to ship coal prior to the railroad's arrival. All three shipped their first coal in 1907.

While Ethel Coal Company and Logan Coal Company--and their successors on the two leases on the north side of Ethel Hollow--combined, separated, and re-combined during the years of operation, the Logan Mining Company--and its successors on the Manitoba lease on the south side of the hollow--remained independent. And, since none of the companies operating on the Manitoba lease used or were associated with the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building, operations on this mine lease are not included in this discussion.

The Ethel Coal Company, formed in 1906, operated No. 1 and No. 2 mines in Ethel Hollow from 1907 to 1917. Not a large firm, it had its only operations in Ethel Hollow. The company's officers were from Southern West Virginia: Harry Bowen, President, and J. C. Pack, Treasurer, both from Bramwell in Mercer County, and J. Epperly, General Manager, from Ethel. In 1907 Ethel Coal Company opened two mines on its 1,809 acre lease: No. 1, located .35 mile from the mouth of Ethel Hollow, and No. 2, just .30 mile up the hollow from No. 1 near the mouth of Pine Fork. The two mines shipped their first coal, 9,454 tons, in 1907. From this year until 1917, except in 1916, production steadily increased to a total of 212,644 tons. The 1917 total established the company as sixth in Logan County in production. It also was one of the eighty-nine firms in the state producing over 200,000 tons annually.

Both No. 1 and No. 2 mines had drift openings, and worked the Chilton seam. Although it operated furnaces--rather than fans--to ventilate the two mines in the first four years, in other respects, the company employed state of the art technology. Both compressed air and electric cutting machines were used. All coal was mechanically cut until 1915, when pick miners were employed to perform part of this task. Haulage was accomplished solely by mules in the years until 1911, when an electric locomotive was added. From 1911 until 1917, mules were used to gather the loaded coal cars inside the mines, and the locomotives

¹⁸Logan County Coal Field map, 1918, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

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were used to pull the cars from the gathering point outside. The company employed 184 men in 1915. Nearly half of the labor force were immigrants, with the largest group being from Hungary. Substantial numbers of Italians were also employed. In addition, Negroes accounted for nearly 1/6 of the work force.

During the 1907 to 1916 period, the Ethel Coal Company constructed a number of surface facilities, including the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building. A number of dwelling houses were built in Ethel Hollow. The company also built the Ethel No. 1 Company Store next to the Stone Mine Supply Building. A wood tipple was constructed in 1907 at No. 1 Mine with picking tables and gravity screens. Other parts of the mining plant added in this period by Ethel Coal Company or shortly afterward by Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, its successor, were a 96'-1" x 41'-11" steel-sided power house, equipped with four return tubular boilers generating a total of 600 horsepower, a 19'-8" x 15' fan house of unknown construction materials, a 10' x 15' stone, supply magazine, a 21' x 17' stone, powder magazine, a 60' x 29' stone blacksmith & machine shop, and a stable.¹⁹

In 1916 Ethel Coal Company took over the lease of the Logan Coal Company and its Logan No. 1 Mine. This mine was located near the mouth of Ethel Hollow. Logan No. 1 had begun production in 1908. Like Ethel Coal Company, the officers of Logan Coal Company were from Southern West Virginia: R. F. Carson, President, from Huntington, J. C. Pack, Treasurer, from Bramwell, and J. Epperly, General Manager, from Ethel. Since both Pack and Epperly also served in the same positions for Ethel Coal Company, these two companies were closely allied prior to the takeover.

Logan No. 1 Mine, like Ethel Nos. 1 and 2, was a drift mine in the Chilton seam. Its production records closely parallel those of the Ethel Coal Company mines, and the technology utilized was strikingly similar. One notable difference was in the work force. There were comparatively fewer immigrants employed at Logan No. 1. Although the percentage of immigrants in the work force approached 50% in 1915, in all other years it was much lower. In fact, in 1911 and 1912, there were no immigrants employed at the No. 1 Mine.

The expanded Ethel Coal Company lasted only a single year, 1917. By 1917, the Logan County coal field had gained a national reputation as a steady supplier of quality, high volatile, bituminous coal, mainly to industrial users in the Midwest, as well as in Eastern Pennsylvania and along the Atlantic Coast. Logan County shipped nearly 10 million tons in 1918, all on the C

¹⁹George N. McLellan, S. Gore, Lee Calloway, "Surveyors Sketch Book of Ethel Buildings," 1923.

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& O Railroad. The county ranked second in the state in terms of production behind McDowell County.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, as the nation's industrial expansion accelerated and coal prices rose, the Logan County coal field attracted the attention of major investors, mainly from the areas where its coal was marketed. Capitalists were drawn to the county because of the high quality of the coal, and because of the fact that the Logan fields had never experienced a cessation of production due to strikes. One of the national firms to move into the county in these boom years was Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, a firm with operations in Michigan and its headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland Cliffs would be the only out-of-state firm to operate any of the Ethel Mines. It took over the leases of Ethel Coal Company, which included Ethel No. 1, No. 2 and Logan No. 1 Mines and facilities, in 1917.

Cleveland Cliffs stepped up the production of the three mines, which, during the 1918 - 1929 period, were named Ethel Nos. 1, 2 and 3, with No. 3 being the former Logan Coal Company mine at the mouth of Ethel Hollow. In 1919, Cleveland Cliffs opened up a slope portal on its lease in the Chilton seam about .20 of a mile from the No. 2 Mine drift mouth. The company abandoned the No. 2 drift opening a few years later. By 1925 the company's annual production was 525,628 tons, establishing it as the ninth most productive firm in Logan County, which shipped a record of over 30 million tons in the same year. The additional production at Cleveland Cliffs was achieved with further mechanization along the lines adopted by Ethel Coal Company. Additional cutting machines were put into service, and animal haulage was abandoned in 1922. In addition, in 1928, the company constructed a new, steel-framed and sided preparation plant, which, besides all the typical picking tables to clean the coal, with hand labor, and screens to segregate the product into various, marketable sizes, included a pneumatic separating unit, which cleaned coal of various sizes with a gravity table and blowing fan. Known in the trade as "air cleaned" coal, the product was marketed by Cleveland Cliffs in four sizes: stove, nut, pea, and slack.

Despite its success in raising production, Cleveland Cliffs experienced problems throughout the years of its lease with its haulage system. Haulage was difficult because the seam was pitched so sharply. Perched on the Warfield anticline, the Chilton seam at this point sloped an average of 7% to 10%, with a slope of 12% in places. The elevation of the seam at the No. 1 & No. 2 drift mouths is 896', while about 4,000 feet to the north, at the highest point in the seam, it is 1370'.²⁰ The steep

²⁰Interview of Bill Long, July 16, 1991.

slope of the seam presented special problems in braking and traction in track haulage and led to several accidents. Of the fourteen documented fatalities between 1918 and 1925 at Cleveland Cliffs, eight, or 57% of the total, were directly attributable to haulage accidents. Statewide, only 18.8% of all mining fatalities in 1921 were haulage related, and 16.9% in 1925.

After 1925, production by Cleveland Cliffs, as well as other Logan County companies, declined dramatically in the wake of a nationwide coal glut. The county produced only about 20 million tons in 1926, one-third less than the previous year. Production continued to slacken through the late 1920s. While Cleveland Cliffs shipped 525,628 tons in 1925, it produced less than half that tonnage, 254,032 tons, in 1929. By 1930, with coal prices plummeting, the company shut down all of its operations at Ethel Hollow.

In 1931 the Ethel Block Coal Company took over the Cleveland Cliffs lease. Ethel Block operated No. 2 Mine for two years, while Ethel No. 1 Mine remained idle. In the depths of the Depression, with a labor surplus in the county and region, Ethel Block, like other Logan County companies, reintroduced pick mining, last practiced in Ethel Hollow in 1922 at the No. 2 Mine. In 1931 Ethel Block mined 50,000 of its 170,500 tons with this method; in 1932 it increased the total to 75,000 of its 247,902 tons. In Logan County only the Lorado Coal Mining Company, with two mines on Buffalo Creek, produced more pick mine coal in these two years.²¹

Nineteen thirty-three brought a dramatic change in labor relations in the Logan coal field. The county's mines, as well as nearly all of those in the rest of the state, were unionized. The passage of the National Recovery Act allowed the United Mine Workers of America, which had campaigned vigorously for more than twenty years, to organize the county and state. All the mines in the county were swiftly organized under the auspices of Van Bittner, John L. Lewis' chief organizer.

In 1933, the Chilton Block Coal Company took over the Ethel Block Coal Company lease. Chilton Block was headed by A. D. Callihan, who stepped-up from his position as superintendent of Ethel Block to serve as President until 1935, when Dan H. Pritchard, of Charleston, took the office. Pritchard would play a major role in the coal industry in Ethel Hollow for the next fifteen years, first as an operator, then as a sales agent.

²¹Most of the companies in Logan County continued to cut their coal mechanically throughout the 1930s. More companies in the Fayette and Pocahontas-Flat Top fields revived the 19th century technology.

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Pritchard, who had several other mines in Southern West Virginia, and a car dealership in Charleston, served as President of Chilton Block until 1941. He also reopened No. 1 Mine in 1935 as "Contractor No. 2," and operated it until 1941. In addition, Pritchard's Charleston firm, Pritchard Coal Company, was the main sales agent for the prized, blocky, Chilton coal from 1938 to 1950.

Although the combined production of No. 1 and No. 2 Mines increased during the Pritchard era, reaching 408,857 tons in 1941, it remained well below the production record of 525,628 tons set in 1925 by Cleveland Cliffs. Of course, Cleveland Cliffs produced its total from three mines. But, the company was also more efficient than its successors. It mined and prepared its 1925 total with 224 men, far less than the 416 employed by the two companies in 1941. In terms of output per man, Cleveland Cliffs's work force was decidedly more efficient, producing 2,346 tons per man, while the 1941 work force produced only 983 tons per man.²²

In the 1933 to 1941 period the No. 1 and No. 2 mining plants were consolidated and much of the No. 1 plant demolished. The outdated No. 1 tippie was demolished and the product of the mine processed at the 1928 Cleveland Cliffs preparation plant at the No. 2 Mine site. The Powerhouse at No. 1 was abandoned and demolished in favor of a sub-station, which received and transformed power for both mines from the grid. However, the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building continued to be used for storage for both mines. Underground, despite the regression to pick mining technology, both mines introduced conveyors, metal pan lines which moved the coal from the face to an inside gathering point, to make hand loading more efficient.

²²Unfortunately, the West Virginia Department of Mines does not give figures on production per man-hour in the 1930s and 1940s, a better indicator than tons per man for production efficiency.

One possible explanation for this drop in efficiency is the employment of pick miners during the 1930s by the two less productive companies. However, pick mining production remained low, and in itself, could not have accounted for the drop in efficiency. In fact, both of the later operations continued to use cutting machines. Together, they utilized nine cutting machines in 1941, while Cleveland Cliffs had only six in 1925. Without further information, perhaps the best explanation for the dramatic drop in productivity per man was the adoption of the "share the work" philosophy among the miners and operators. With the dismal economic conditions of the Depression and a surplus of labor, more men were put to work, but each worked a lesser number of hours.

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Despite the fact that 1941 was the most productive year since 1925 for the two Pritchard-controlled mines, this was the year in which the Charleston operator had his downfall. He was forced into bankruptcy. Pritchard No. 1 Mine operations ceased, and the Chilton Block Coal Company was forced into receivership. With Pritchard's demise, another Charleston man, A. L. McCalla, stepped in to take over both companies. McCalla, a banker with an office in the Kanawha Valley Building, was named receiver for Chilton Block in 1941. He managed the company's affairs and continued to operate No. 2 as a receiver until 1944, when he formed the Chilton Coal Company to manage the mine. In 1942 McCalla set up Ethel Chilton Mines, Inc. to operate the No. 1 Mine. He was president of both of these companies.

Chilton Coal Company, founded in 1944 in the wake of Dan Pritchard's demise, operated at No. 1 Mine for only two years. In 1946, it was taken over by the stronger McCalla company, Ethel Chilton Mines, Inc. McCalla continued to direct this company from his Charleston office until 1949, when L. L. Burns replaced him as President. In the following year, A. T. Massey Coal Company, Inc. became the exclusive sales agency for Ethel Chilton Mines. The Richmond company handled Ethel Chilton's product until 1962, when the mines were shut-down.

In response to wartime demands and post-war prosperity, Logan County steadily increased its production during the 1940s from just over 19 million tons in 1941 to a post-Depression high of 23,874,520 tons in 1947. Most of this increase can be attributed to an increase in the work force from 11,445 in 1940 to 12,996 in 1947. The 1940s were, however, the decade when mechanical loading displaced the traditional hand loading technique, and part of the production increase can be accounted for by the introduction and increased use of loading machines.

By 1947, production at the two Ethel mines had risen from the 1941 total, 408,857 tons, to 452,812 tons, establishing Ethel Chilton Mines, Inc. as the eleventh most productive of Logan County's forty-nine companies. In this year, the company, with financial backing from A. T. Massey Coal Company, Inc., renovated the 1928 tippie at No. 2 Mine site. At first an experimental wet separating system using calcium chloride was tried, but in 1952 a heavy-medium (magnetite) system was installed. It was in this same year that the first loading machines, five Joy 8BU loaders, were introduced. Two were put into service at No. 2 Mine, slope. The remainder were put in the new No. 3 Mine, which was opened in the Chilton seam on the hill about .80 mile northeast of No. 2. One of the reasons for opening No. 3 Mine was that it allowed the company to better manage haulage in the steeply pitched seam. Joy-32E shuttle cars were used to move the coal from the loading

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machine to tram cars.²³

In the next four years, production increased dramatically to an all-time high of 690,125 tons in 1951. Although part of the production increase can be attributed to the reopening of No. 3 Mine, the adoption of the loading machine raised productivity from 1,764 tons per day from in 1947 to 2,852 tons per day in 1951. A small amount of hand-loading onto conveyors continued through the early-1950s, mainly at No. 1 mine, but by the end of the decade, the hand loading era at Ethel Nos. 1, 2 & 3, had come to a end.

After the 1951 peak, production remained very close to the 550,000 ton per year level through most of the decade, despite the closing of No. 1 in 1952 and No. 3 in 1956. These two mines had been depleted of their minable reserves. In 1959 the first roof bolting machines, which supplemented timbering as a means of roof control, were brought into No. 2 Mine. However, after 1959 production at No. 2 Mine declined rapidly. In 1961, with its reserves depleted, No. 2 was shut down. The mining plant and houses used by the various coal companies reverted to Dingess-Rum Coal Company. The No. 2 Tipple and a number of houses in Ethel Hollow which were vacated were demolished in the early 1960s. In about 1963 the railroad lines in Ethel Hollow were taken up.

In 1962, when the No. 2 Mine of Ethel Chilton Mines was shut-down, C. F. Colley, who had served as store manager and procurement agent for Ethel Chilton Mines, Inc. since 1951, leased a small parcel from the Dingess-Rum Coal Company that included the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building. From the building Colley operated the Colley Equipment Company, which bought used mine equipment and machinery, reconditioned it in the stone building, and then resold it. Colley was responsible for the liquidation of much of the underground machinery and surface equipment that remained from earlier operations in Ethel Hollow. Colley modified the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building in 1963 to suit the needs of his company. His company leased the building until 1986.²⁴ Later, in 1987, the Cook Electric Maintenance Company leased the building for two years.²⁵

In 1990, plans were made by the A. T. Massey Coal Company to start a new, combination underground and surface mining operation

²³Interviews of Bill Long, December 16, 1991; and C. F. Colley, December 16, 1991.

²⁴Interview with C. F. Colley, November 12, 1991.

²⁵Interview with Bill Long, December 18, 1991.

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in Ethel Hollow. Although the Chilton seam had been depleted, high quality coal was available from other seams on the Dingess-Rum Coal Company property. In preparation for the construction of a new mining plant, the remaining houses in Ethel Hollow--except for the five clustered around the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building--were demolished. The Supply Building was retained to house core samples and other supplies related to the coal prospecting operations.

VI. Association with the Battle of Blair Mountain

The Ethel Coal Company Supply Building is located in Ethel Hollow, a staging area for defensive forces in the Battle of Blair Mountain in August and September, 1921. The building is situated two miles southwest of Blair Mountain and Spruce Fork Ridge, which were the battle lines during the confrontation. The building, itself, however, was not used in any manner during the affair.

The Battle of Blair Mountain was the culmination of the United Mine Workers of America's attempt to organize the highly productive Southern West Virginia coal fields in the post-World War I era. In 1919 the UMWA began its efforts to organize Mingo County, just south of Logan County. In August and September of that year, hundreds of union miners, most from the Kanawha coal field, began a march on Mingo County to put an end to the mine guard system and unionize the miners. The march was headed-off by Governor Cornwell at Marmet and aborted.²⁶

A prolonged and violent strike in Mingo County followed the Armed March. In 1920 martial law was declared and Federal troops were called in. With the support of the troops, the nonunion operators²⁷ succeeded in beating the strike and reopening their mines.

On August 1, 1921, Sid Hatfield, who had become the miners' hero because of his role in the Matewan Massacre in 1920, was killed at Welch. The union miners in the Kanawha and other unionized coal fields were infuriated and screamed for revenge. A thousand miners rallied at Charleston on August 7, and, on August 24, thousands of armed miners set out from Marmet, near Charleston, for Logan and Mingo Counties. Joined by others as they moved southwest, the miners' army swelled to around 7,500

²⁶George Swain, Facts about the Two Armed Marches on Logan, (Charleston, WV: Jones Printing Company, 1962), p. 7.

²⁷Savage, p. 23.

men by the time it reached northeastern Logan County.²⁸

Meanwhile, the sheriff of Logan County, Don Chafin, readied his defensive forces. Chafin used the same defensive line that he had established in 1919 in anticipation of the first armed march. This was along Spruce Fork Ridge, which separates the Guyandotte and Little Coal River watersheds. Chafin established two-man pickets every fifty yards along the ridge. He concentrated his forces, which amounted to about 2,500 men, mostly volunteers, at the major gaps, Blair Mountain and Crooked Creek, setting up machine gun nests and breast works there.²⁹

With headquarters in Logan, Chafin set up field posts at various points along the defensive line. One of these posts was at Ethel.³⁰ After extensive historical research and interviews, Institute historians, in the Battle of Blair Mountain Cultural Survey and Recording Project, concluded that this post was located at the Cleveland Cliffs Company Store No. 2 at the mouth of Ethel Hollow.³¹

On August 27, after the intervention of union leaders, Frank Keeney and Fred Mooney, had defused the march, a force of over 200 State police troopers and deputies under the command of Captain J. R. Brockus, set out from the Ethel post for Beech Creek on the union side of Spruce Fork Ridge, where they planned to serve warrants on certain union leaders. After moving across the ridge, Brockus' force was met at Monclo on Beech Creek by a force of armed union miners. There, a shootout occurred in which three union miners were killed.³² When news of this confrontation, the Beech Creek Raid, reached the miners, who were returning to their homes, it rekindled their fighting spirit. They regrouped and pressed on with the march.

From the existing documentation, it is impossible to conclude which route Brockus' force took across Spruce Fork Ridge. The

²⁸Ibid., pp. 76-77.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 81-82; Robert Spence, The Land of the Guyandot, (Detroit: Harlo Press), pp. 438-39.

³⁰"Report of G. H. Gwinn, Carl Dodge, et. al.," September 2, 4, 1921. File of the Logan County Coal Operators' Association, West Virginia State Archives; Charleston Gazette, August 29, 1921.

³¹Billy Joe Peyton, et. al., "Battle of Blair Mountain Cultural Resource Survey and Recording Project: Final Report," December 20, 1991.

³²Miners' Treason Trials, "Testimony of Captain J. R. Brockus."

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Institute's study concludes that the route was either up the Left Fork of Dingess Run (Ethel Hollow) to Pine Fork, and then along Spruce Fork Ridge and down to Beech Creek (in which case Brockus would have passed the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building), or up the Right Fork of Dingess Run, then up the graded road to Blair Mountain, northward along Spruce Fork Ridge, and down Beech Creek.³³

On August 28, the first casualty in the defensive forces, State Police Private George Duling, occurred in the Club House, 175' north of the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building. Duling was sitting on the Club House porch when he was shot in the head by John L. Rice, an employee of the Logan Mining Company. Although the shooting was deemed an accident by Sheriff Don Chafin, Rice was arrested.³⁴

Most of the fighting in the battle occurred between August 31 and September 4. The fighting was confined to the Spruce Fork Ridge line and its northeast approaches. With the exception of a brief breakthrough at Crooked Creek Gap, about 4 miles northwest of the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building, the union forces were unable to penetrate beyond the Spruce Fork ridge defensive line. No fighting was reported in the Ethel Hollow area.³⁵ On September 4 Federal troops arrived and forced the miners to disband. Sixteen men died in the battle, considered by historians as the greatest domestic armed conflict in American labor history and the largest armed insurrection since the Civil War.³⁶

³³Peyton, "Battle of Blair Mountain Cultural Resource Survey and Recording Project: Final Report," p. 28.

³⁴Savage, Thunder in the Mountains, p. 118.

³⁵Peyton, "Battle of Blair Mountain Cultural Resource Survey and Recording Project: Final Report," pp. 19-51.

³⁶Savage, Thunder in the Mountains, p iii. Also, David Alan Corbin, Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields - The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1981), p. 195.

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Ethel 1, 2 & 3 Mines of the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, Ethel,
W. Va., May 10, 1918. Carr and Hall Engineers, Logan, W.
Va. Dingess-Rum Land Company, McConnell, West Virginia.

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Bunch, Robert, July 16, August 8, 1991, personal interviews.
Bunch, 62, worked at the Ethel Coal Company Supply Building
in the late-1940s and early-1950s. Then, in the 1980s, he
lived at Ethel Hollow, directly across from the building.

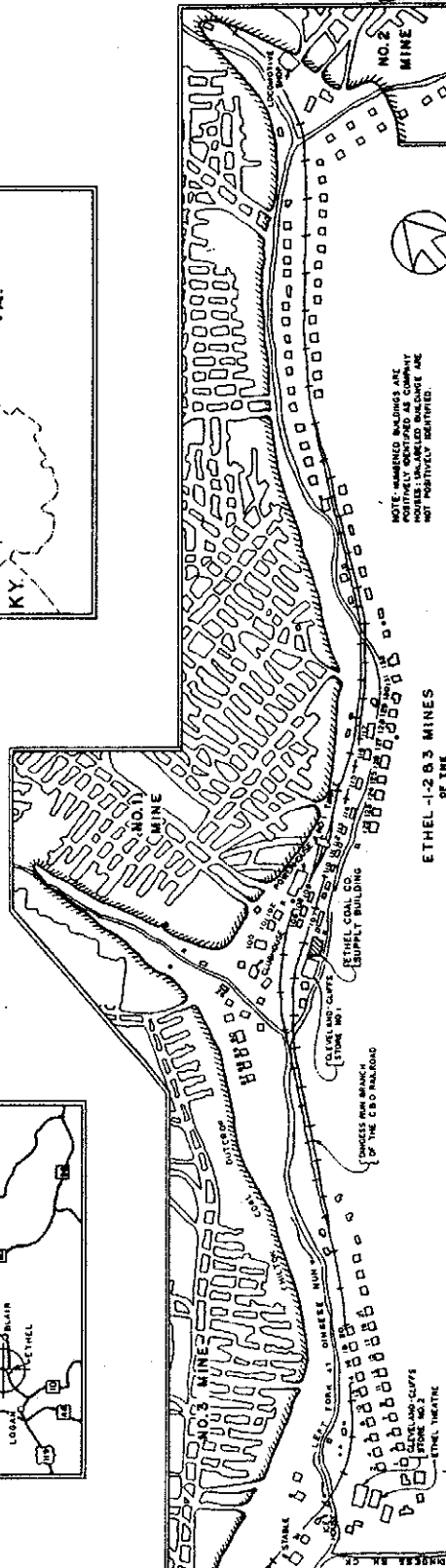
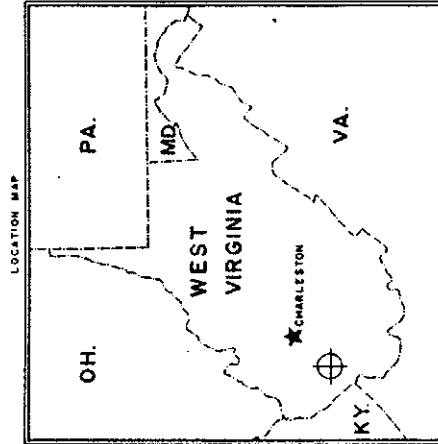
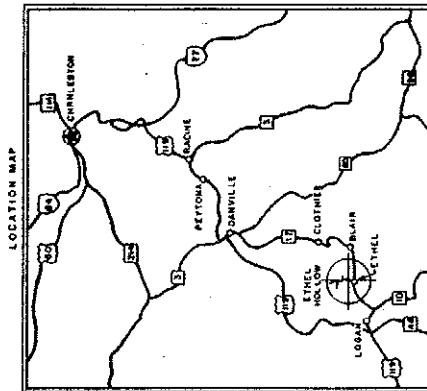
Coda, Vanta, December 16, 1991, by phone. Coda is grandson of S.
C. Coda, a prominent Italian mason in Logan County in the
1910s and 1920s.

Colley, C. F., November 12, December 11, 16, 17, 1991, by phone.
Colley was store manager and procurement agent for Ethel
Chilton Mines, Inc. from 1952 to 1962 and ran Colley
Equipment Company from 1962 to 1986.

Long, Bill, July 16, personal interview; December 10, 16, 17, 18,
1991 by phone. Long, 68, has been resident engineer of
Dingess-Rum Coal Company since 1947.

Spence, Robert, July 10, 1991, personal interview; December 16,
1991, by phone. Spence is author of The Land of the
Guyandot: A History of Logan County.

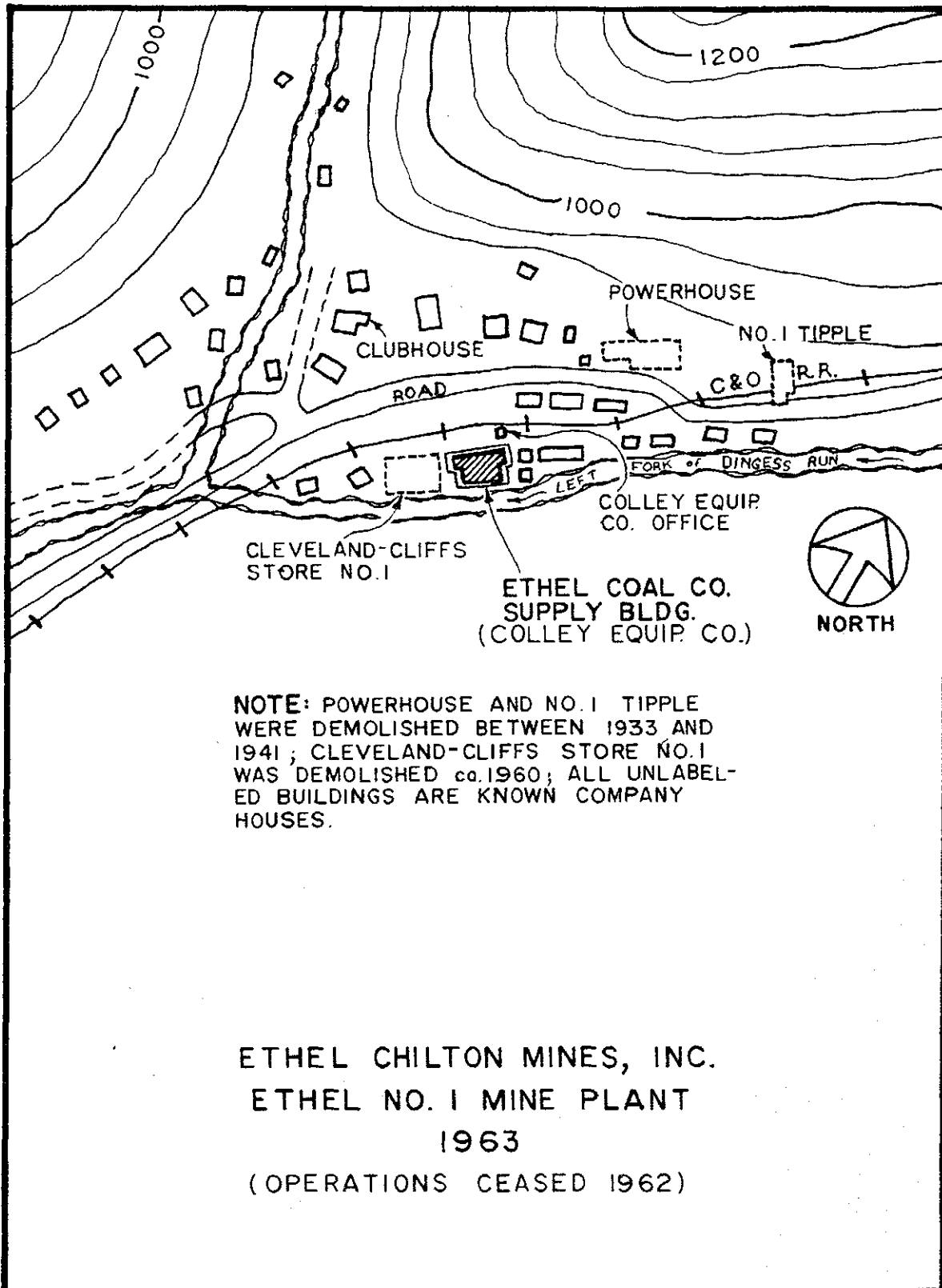
CLEVELAND CLIFFS IRON CO.
LOGAN VICINITY
LOGAN COUNTY, WV

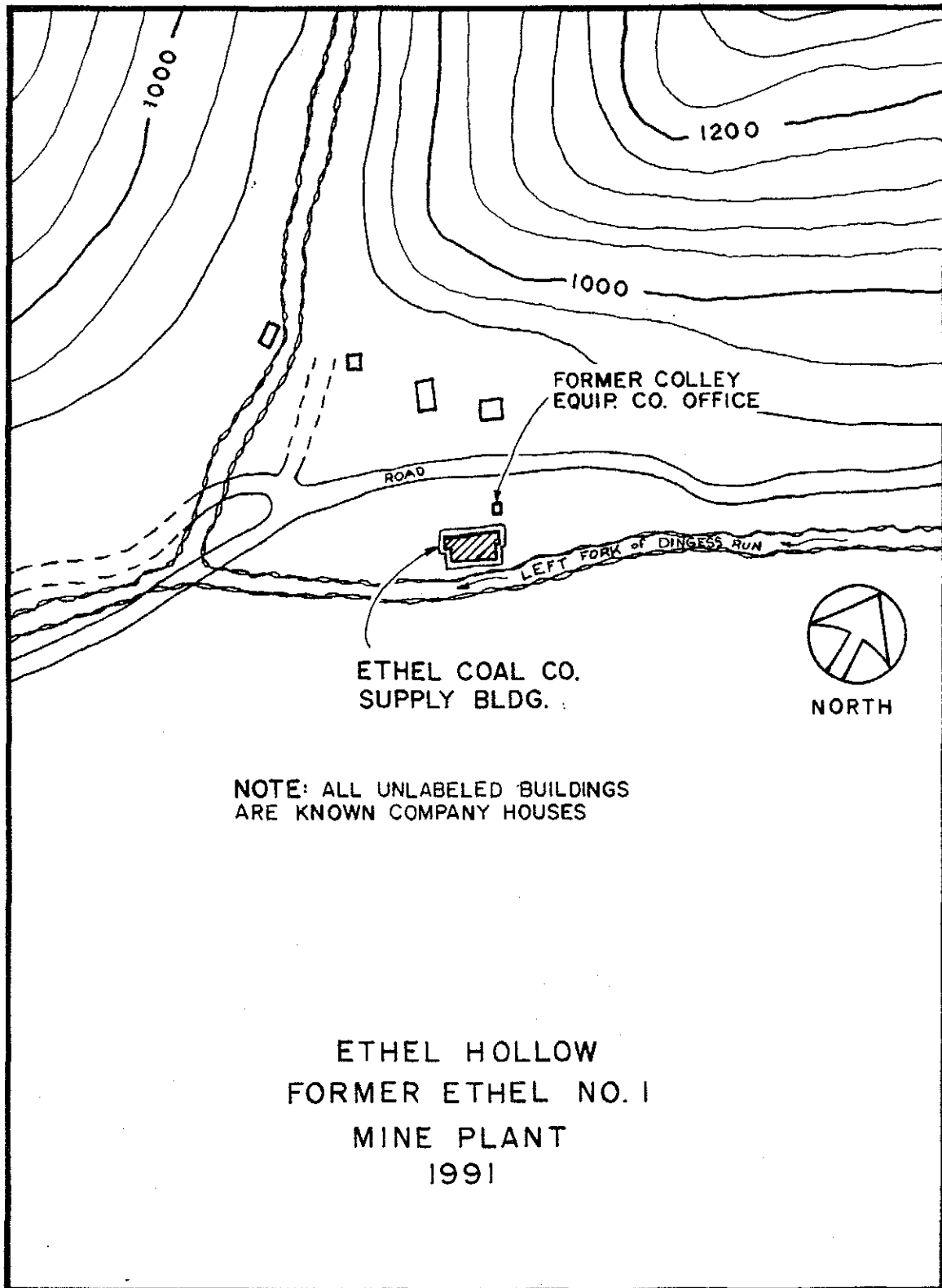


NOTE: MARKED BUILDINGS ARE
POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS COMPANY
PROPERTY. UNMARKED BUILDINGS ARE
NOT POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED.

ETHEL-1-2-3 MINES
OF THE
CLEVELAND-CLIFFS IRON CO.
ETHEL, W. VA. 1-2-3
MAY 10-1918
CARR AND WALL ENGINEERS

HISTORIC MAP COURTESY OF OHIO-NEW COAL CO.
MAY 10-1918



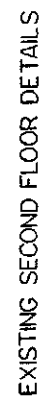


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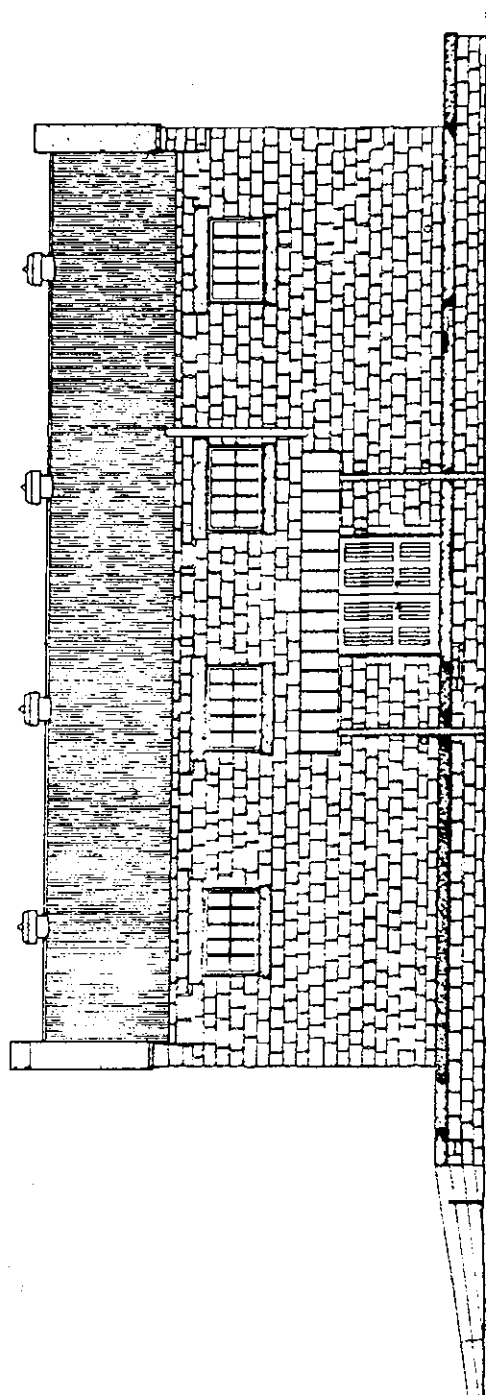
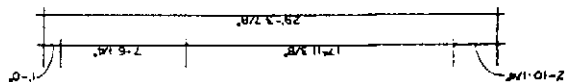


EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE:
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FEET - 14" = 1'-0"
0 1 2 3
FEET - 14" = 1'-0"

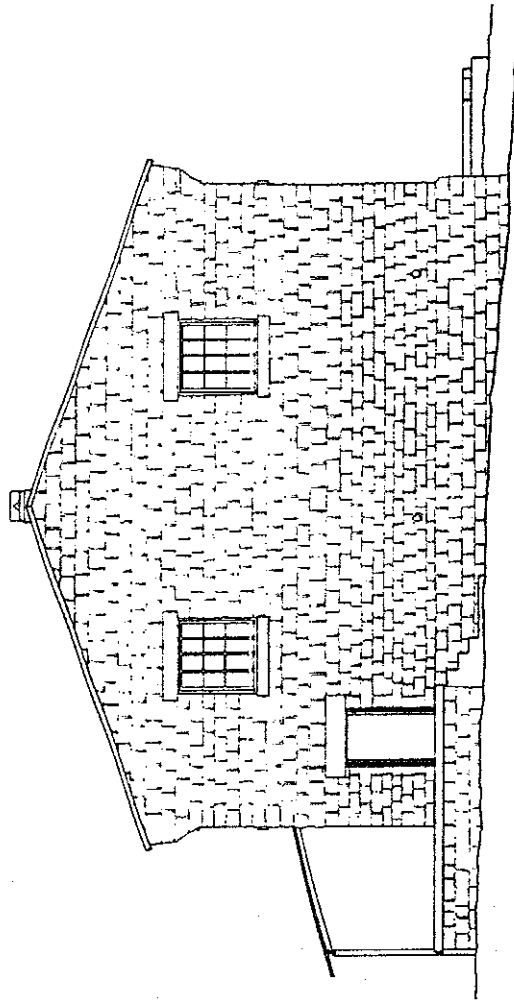


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EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

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EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

